National Horticulture Mission

3871. SHRIMATI SYEDA ANWARA TAIMUR: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have announced to launch a National Horticulture Mission for development of horticulture in the country; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the steps being taken to develop horiticulture in Assam as well as North-Eastern Region?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) Yes, Sir. The Government have announced to launch a National Horticulture Mission for development of horticulture in the country.

(b) The proposed Mission envisages an end to end approach for addressing the issues on Horticultural Research, Development, Post Harvest Management, Processing and Marketing with a view to improve the production and productivity of the horticultural crops and income of the farmers.

As regards development of horticulture in the North Eastern Region including Assam a Centrally Sponsored Scheme on Technology Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture in North Eastern States, Sikkim, Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttaranchal is being implemented separately since 2001-02.

Entry of Private Farm Produce Markets

3872. SHRIMATI SUKHBUNS KAUR: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have evolved a plan for facilitating the entry of private farm produce markets to link the farmer directly to the consumer;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken to implement the same?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) Setting up of Agricultural Markets

is a State subject. Under the existing law dealing with agricultural markets (APMC Act), the State Government alone is empowered to initiate the process of setting up of markets for agricultural commodities in notified areas. The processing industry cannot buy directly from the farmers. The farmer is restricted from entering into direct contract with any manufacturer as the produce is required to be canalized through regulated markets. These restrictions are acting as disincentive to farmers, trade and industry. The State Governments have, therefore, been advised to bring reforms in the APMC Act to allow direct marketing and contract farming and to permit setting up of competitive markets. Development of alternative competitive markets in private and cooperative sectors would provide freedom to farmers to sell their produce in the markets providing better prices/services.

(c) A model APMC Act has been circulated by this Ministry to all the States, to guide them in bringing changes in their respective APMC Act for the removal of all restrictions on direct marketing by the farmers. A reform linked Central Sector Scheme for Development/Strengthening of Marketing Infrastructure, Grading and Standardization has been approved to assist the development of agricultural marketing infrastructure in the States/UTs that amend the APMC Act on the lines suggested in the model law.

Losses in Fisheries and Aquaculture due to Tsunami

3873. SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that according to the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) estimates, the losses in fisheries and aquaculture are put at US$ 520 million due to Tsunami;

(b) if so, the details thereof, and

(c) how this has affected our ecosystem?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) assessment of post Tsunami losses in fisheries and aquaculture are global in nature pertains to seven most affected countries including India. However, no specific figure or estimates are available for India as such as per FAO assessment.